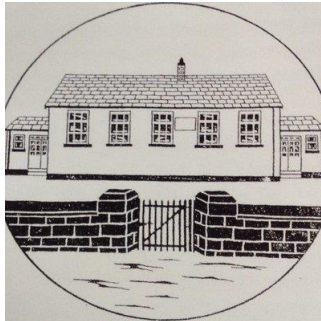


# **CREAVERY PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **Complaints Policy 2025-2026**

# **Creavery Primary School**

## **Complaints Procedure**

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## **1. Forward**

### **VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT**

Every child will be provided with an environment which is conducive to learning and reaching their full potential in all areas of the curriculum in a happy supportive atmosphere.

Creavery Primary School aims to maintain a safe, stable and caring learning environment in which pupils, parents and staff work together to develop self-respect and respect for others.

### **FEEDBACK AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DIALOGUE**

Here at Creavery Primary School, we take feedback, including complaints very seriously. We have the best interest of all our pupils and their families at the centre of all we do. In this regard, we encourage anyone with a concern to speak to us as soon as possible. If concerns are dealt with at an early stage, then they are more likely to be resolved and there is no unnecessary dissatisfaction.

Many issues can be addressed simply by talking to the relevant staff in school who will be happy to help. Open communication and regular engagement between the school staff and the wide range of users is vital to the effective management of the school.

We welcome open communication with our staff; you can speak to staff on an informal basis as you drop your child off or collect them from school. If it would be more appropriate to make an appointment, please ring the school or send a letter to your child's teacher stating a selection of suitable times. If you have any issues, please talk to the teacher as soon as possible.

Concerns about matters other than the classroom should be raised with the Associate Principal/ Principal, while complaints about the Associate Principal/Principal should be raised with a member of the Board of Governors.

**We take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters raised.**

## **2. Scope of the Complaints Procedure**

A complaint is described as an expression of dissatisfaction with our work.

### 2.1 Complaints with Established Procedures

Our school Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking complaints seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that they can be resolved quickly and effectively. Some examples of complaints dealt with:

- Not following school policy;
- Communication delays / lack of communication;
- Difficulties in staff / pupil relationships.

This procedure should not be used for complaints with separate established procedures, however if your complaint relates to the school's failure to correctly administer any of these procedures, then you may complain by means of this procedure. Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms, which are not part of the school's complaints procedure, are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Associate Principal/ Principal or Chair of Governors will advise on the appropriate procedure to use when a complaint is raised.

#### Exceptions (refer to Appendix 1)

- Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusion of children from school
- Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- School Development Proposals • Child Protection / Safeguarding 2.2

### 2.2 Anonymous Complaints

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors to be of a very serious nature. The decision of dealing with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

### **3. Aims and Complaints Procedure**

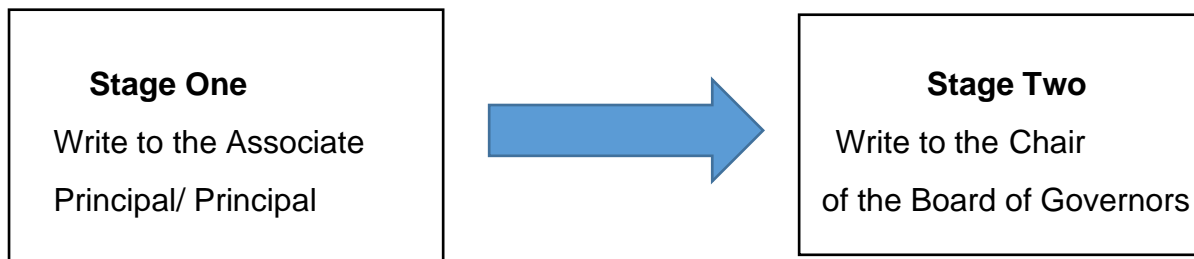
#### 3.1 When dealing with complaints the school will;

- encourage resolution of all concerns as quickly as possible;
- provide timely responses to concerns and complaints;
- keep you informed of progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate;
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved;
- respect confidentiality;
- fully address complaints and provide an effective response;
- take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate;
- be responsive to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school;
- Provide a process that is simple to understand and use;
- Be impartial; and
- Be non-adversarial.

#### 3.2. Availability of Procedure

A copy of this Procedure is available from the school on request.

## 4. SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE



### Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.

### Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Associate Principal/ Principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. **If the complaint is about the Associate Principal/ Principal, proceed to Stage Two.** The school requires all complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process.

Please provide as much information as possible including:

- name and contact details;
- what the complaint is about;
- what has already been done to try to resolve it and
- what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 10 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Associate Principal/ Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld.

**If, for any reason, the consideration of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.**

***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.***

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage One, the complaint may be progressed to Stage Two which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

### Stage Two

If your complaint is about the Associate Principal/ Principal or if the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (care of the school marked 'Private and Confidential'). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a sub-committee to review the complaint.

**'Private and Confidential'**

**Chair of Governors**

**Mr T Clarke MLA**

**C/O Creavery P.S.**

**38 Thornhill Road**

**ANTRIM**

**BT41 2LH**

***In the case of the complaint being about the Associate Principal/ Principal, this Sub-Committee will investigate the complaint.***

Please provide clear information and include the following:

- Reason(s) why you disagree with the Stage One findings;
- Any aspect in which you think that the school's Complaints Procedure was not fully followed.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 10 working school days and a final response normally made within 20 school-working days from the receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

***If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, complainants will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.***

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

### **Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)**

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if the parent/ guardian remain dissatisfied. Contact details are provided below:

### **Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House

33 Wellington Place

Belfast

BT1 6 HN

Freepost : FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone 02890233821

Freephone 0800 34 34 24

Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)

Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

**Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.**

## **5. WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THIS PROCEDURE**

### **5.1 Your rights as a person making a complaint**

In dealing with a complaint, we will ensure:

- fair treatment;
- courtesy;
- a timely response;
- accurate advice
- respect for privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint and clear reasons for decisions.

### **5.2 Your responsibility as a person making a complaint**

In making a complaint it is important to;

- raise issues in a timely manner;
- treat our staff with respect and courtesy;
- provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised;
- use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels.

### **5.3 Rights of the parties involved during the investigation**

Where a meeting is arranged the complainant may be accompanied but not represented by another person.

**Complainant:** - should be informed that they may be accompanied but not represented by another person during the process e.g. spouse, friend, family member or interpreter, provided this person is not offering legal representation or acting in an official capacity. If the complainant feels unable to speak on their own behalf, they may avail of support from outside agencies as agreed with the school. (Local MLAs / Councillors / Citizens' Advice Bureau / Parenting NI / Children's Commissioner).

**Staff Members:** - should be informed that they may be accompanied or represented by another person during the process e.g. union representative, colleague.

**Pupils:** - permission should be sought from parents/guardians and parent/guardian or other nominated adult should accompany pupils.

It may be appropriate to seek a written statement if a person is unable to meet for any reason.

Parties should normally be informed when a complaint is made against them and be able to see relevant correspondence.

**This Procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.**

## **6. MAKING A COMPLAINT**

### 6.1 Equality

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.

### 6.2 Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints' procedure having been completed and the complaint having been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant still remains dissatisfied. The school must balance the rights of an individual to make a complaint and have it fairly investigated with the rights of staff not to be subjected to unacceptable actions or behaviour. Any decision to treat a complainant as unreasonable must take into account the need to ensure that the complaints procedure is being fairly applied and every attempt has been made to communicate and address concerns about behaviour/conduct with the complainant. In the event that such a decision has been taken, the complainant will be advised accordingly.

If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chairperson of the Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the school with the same issue it may choose not to respond.

## **Appendix 1: Exceptions**

<b>Exceptions</b>	<b>Contacts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Admissions/Expulsions/Exclusion of children from the school</li></ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Operations and Estates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li></ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Development Proposals</li></ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child Protection/Safeguarding</li></ul>	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services